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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 7 NO. 7
FIRST ISSUE OF
APRIL 1977
#151

* SPRING SCHEDULE CHANGES
* IS THE "CANADIAN" DETERIORATING?
* AMTRAK MEETS THE GREYHOUND

ON THE COVER:

A two-car train of the electric Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad--the South Shore Line interurban--at South Bend, Indiana. See Urban-Suburban Transit section for news of this line. Photo by Rick Priest.

LETTERS

On Apr 11 I rode the ADIRONDACK for the fourth time since its beginning. I must take exception to the remarks made by Stephen Linde (last issue). Fans will miss the PAs, but other than the diners, which were the best anywhere, the rest of the pre-Turboliner train was sub-par. Air conditioning and heating failures were common; the dome when it was on was often like an oven. Crew morale was not always that sensational.

The Turboliners will be popular with the general public, which is not true of the 1950-era locomotive-hauled train. If any speedup can be made in an overall too slow schedule, it will be made with the new equipment. We whipped along at a merry pace from Keesville to Rouses Point on the 11th, and made up five minutes.

A recent article in another fan magazine asked, "Are we enthusiasts or embalmers?" The point is well taken. I like 1931 standard Pullmans, but know that few would ride them except me. Let's go with Amtrak and the future.

Rev. Walter F. Smith
Lisbon, New York

There are many of us train riders in upstate New York who felt and still do feel that the only thing that might save the ADIRONDACK would be the replacement of the rolling antiques with equipment that works. While certain vocal railfans heartily disagree with this position, it is mostly those who spend more time with camera in hand taking photos of the PAs and not spending money to buy tickets to justify a train that is right now losing money at the rate of $97,000 per month. Fortunately the persons who wrote the RTN articles at least were good enough to have ridden it.

Many of us have now used the Turbo-fied ADIRONDACK and overall find the use of the new equipment to be a vast improvement over the old. Let's face it, railfans, the traveling public isn't interested in PAs, antiques, or whatever. Rather, good equipment, reasonable service (a dining car is not really necessary), and convenient schedules--well, we've at least begun to get close to the latter. Perhaps the ripped-off New York Taxpayer may be redeemed. The D&H operating crews also enjoy having equipment that works. And, guess what, railfans? Some of us even like Amfleet. Fortunately, Amtrak does not have to rely on the railfans for its revenues.

Richard L. Walker
Castleton-on-Hudson, New York

Stephen Linde's article could not have been more timely. Just two days before RTN arrived, a friend and I were New York-bound aboard Second 68 with a Turboload of others who had spent Easter weekend in Montreal. Merely sitting down was a great relief to many, like us, who had stood--yes, stood--all the way from Grand Central to Windsor on #69 the Friday before--a trip which lasted, with delays, over 10½ hours. It was the old story of fixed consists and peak loads. Long overdue promotion--Amtrak's roundtrip weekend bargain fare of $27 NY-Montreal--was filling the aisles and the vestibules as well. To someone's credit, there was a second Turbo on hand Easter Sunday to handle the spillover as we returned, but this seemed a costly alternative to running a conventional train with extra cars. It also complicated the dispatching. (continued on page 23)

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IN THIS ISSUE

Carl Fowler concludes the rail journey he began last issue, part of it being a transcontinental ride on CP's CANADIAN, and the other an Amjourney thru the West. A good portion of the text of Paul Reistrup's letter to Greyhound's president on the occasion of their meeting recently in Phoenix, is printed in this issue.

ENERGY PLAN SILENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

President Carter's national energy plan was presented to the nation and to Congress in televised addresses on Apr 18 and 20. The plan is aimed at conserving energy, and includes a surcharge on purchases of new, low-gas-mileage automobiles, as well as a "standby" gasoline tax that would take effect in stages yearly if the nation failed voluntarily to cut gasoline usage by 10%. The plan, which needs Congressional approval, failed to include any provisions for building up public transit to fill in for the automobile mileage that it hopes to cut. In Carter's initial address he did comment once that "Our cars (are) too large and inefficient...while our public transportation system continues to decline." And he said that oil and natural gas "made possible the age of automobile and airplane travel. Nearly everyone who is alive today grew up during this age and we have never known anything different." Carter said that we must prepare "quickly" for a change, one of "strict conservation" and switching to other energy sources "becauase we are now running out of gas and oil."

But the plan itself, when presented to Congress, included no provisions for altering transportation modes. The New York Times on Apr 20 noted that the public transit aspect was not in the Carter plan, altho it was the number one item mentioned by the public in giving suggestions to save energy.

Amtrak prepared a statement that noted that trains can make a significant contribution to energy conservation. The corporation said that there will be a voluntary shift to trains and other public transport even before gasoline prices rise; and when higher gas prices impact upon the public, there should be a "substantial diversion" of ridership to trains. Amtrak noted that it cannot handle such a diversion unless it is gradual, because Amtrak is "undercapitalized"--needing more cars and locomotives, improved track, and modernized facilities.

NARP CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY

The National Association of Railroad Passengers on Apr 22 and 23 marked ten years since the founding of the consumer organization by attorney Anthony Haswell. NARP President Orren Beaty, Executive Director Ross Capon, Assistant Director Tom Crikelair, and its Board of Directors invited rail supporters to a reception in Washington for the event. Back in 1967, an Associated Press report noted that founder Tony Haswell, questioned as to why he would make such a move, replied that "I can't afford not to do this. I would wonder for the rest of my life if it could have been done. And that's a terrible way to live out your life." Not every public-spirited person has Mr. Haswell's opportunity to observe the fruits of his own work in his lifetime; and doubtless the real flourishing of rail travel is still well in the future. But Haswell and his successors at NARP have reason to be proud of what their efforts have helped produce in our present day.

On Apr 23 NARP was to hear an address by Amtrak President Paul Reistrup and to consider proposals from English and Canadian groups that NARP extend its help to their own countries.

AMTRAK MAKES SPRING SCHEDULE CHANGES

With the Apr 24 changeover to Daylight Saving Time, Amtrak is making a number of important schedule changes, and will presumably issue a new nationwide timetable. Schedules available as we go to press are given on pages 14 and 15.

Urban-Suburban

SOUTH SHORE LINE will keep running a while longer. The ICC on Apr 7 told owner Chessie System to keep the interurban commuter trains operating another 10 months. The extension was given to allow time for Indiana and Illinois state and local officials to arrange public financing for the railroad's passenger service. A federal grant of about $40 million is said to be available for new rolling stock, but local matching funds must be arranged, and the Chessie says it cannot afford that on its own. The ICC apparently indicated that if financial arrangements are not made by next Feb 7, the service will be allowed to terminate.

THE CHICAGO-VALPARAISO ConRail commuter line was supposed to terminate operations after Apr 8; but on that evening notices were given to passengers that "due to action taken today by the Hammond, Indiana District Court, trains 453, 455, 454, and 456 will continue to operate until further notice." A commuter group obtained an injunction at the last minute. Both trains the night of Apr 8 used steam-generator equipped GP9 engines and the old ex-PRR coaches. The ex-EL Cleveland/Youngstown coaches are stored in the former PC 12th St. Coach Yard in Chicago. ConRail said earlier that it was considering a 60-day extension of the service in order to work out a uniform policy on liability insurance for commuter runs.

THE CHESSIE SYSTEM will continue to run its Lake Michigan trainferries this summer. The ICC is hearing the railroad's abandonment petition, which has been delayed by an environmental impact statement preparation. The service operates between Ludington MI and Milwaukee and Manitowoc WI.

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL says that in 1976 highway fatalities rose for the first time since 1974. The 1975 total was 46,000, and it rose in 1976 to 47,100. Reasons given for the rise were increased auto mileage and difficulty in enforcing the 55mph speed limit.

MS. JOAN CLAYBROOK, former executive director of Congress Watch, an organization developing public interest legislation, was sworn in on Apr 8 as administrator of the DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Rail

SOME MORE DETAILS on train discontinuances reported here last issue: the CTC allowed the suspension of Richmond-Lyster-Quebec City service, a 5-times weekly CN RDC service, pending further hearings.

CALL FOR NATIONALIZATION of the Canadian bus industry: Transport 2000 President Harry Gow this month proposed a dramatic new policy to gain public control over surface passenger transport. Mr. Gow pointed out the inconsistencies in surface transportation planning, citing the recent Railway Transport Committee's decision to allow the discontinuance of vital regional rail passenger services.

"I feel these decisions were based on a narrow interpretation of the Railway Act in evaluating the need for these services. Every time a bus has gone near a rail station, the Commission has ordered the discontinuance of fuel-efficient comfortable, passenger trains. The bus and rail modes should no longer be viewed as competitors. These two modes should be integrated to provide a cohesive public ground transportation system, using the bus and train in a rational transport network allowing improved mobility for all Canadians. The train can offer service at peak travel times with the bus providing complementary shceduales at other hours of the day. This move will be especially important to accommodate the increasing demand for public transport, as decreasing fuel supplies render the automobile too expensive to operate. We believe the government has set up a corporation that can accomplish the integration of surface passenger

Transit

Rick Priest

SP COMMUTE LINE in San Francisco is now connected by 30¢ express bus #80 with the Embarcadero Center area near BART's Embarcadero Station.

"ADELPHI ON WHEELS" rail commuter college on 4 ConRail and LIRR lines is still going strong after its 1971 beginning.

JAPANESE COMMUTER SERVICE resumed normal operations Apr 21 after a short strike by 330,000 rail workers inconvenienced the nation's 18 million commuters.

72 PER CENT of Washington DC residents gave strong support to completion of the full 100-mile Metro system in a poll of 1100 persons conducted by American University students last month.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION has sufficient authorization to carry its urban mass transportation capital grant program thru Fiscal 1979 at a reasonable level, Secretary Brock Adams said Apr 6. Adams was to hold his second town meeting in San Jose Apr 21, a date change at the last moment from that previously given here. Business Week magazine (Apr 18) reporting on Carter's recent note to Adams telling him to look to buses and traffic monitoring as alternatives to fixed-rail systems, says there is a "dark tunnel ahead for mass transit." The magazine has a DOT official saying that the projected costs of subway systems is scaring everybody, and that we need time to digest what has happened so far before beginning big, new transit systems.

LIRR HAS CHRISTENED one of 37 new diesel locomotives (GP38-2 models) being delivered to it from the EMD the "Walter L. Shclager, Jr." after the late president of the LIRR. A ceremony was held Apr 7 at Long Island City Station.

Canada

transport modes thru VIA Canada."

At present, Transport 2000 noted, the Canadian bus industry is dominated by the American-based Greyhound Corporation in Western Canada and the Power Corporation in Eastern Canada. Voyageur Bus Lines is controlled by Power Corporation thru Canada Steamship Lines. Mr. Paul Martin, President of Canada Steamship Lines, has been an outspoken critic of government subsidies to rail passenger service.

He has presented himself as an unbiased observer of the transport industry while in fact being a spokesman for the Power Corporation which seeks a monopoly over surface transportation in the Quebec-Windsor corridor, Gow said. The bus industry only became a serious competitor of the passenger train when the provincial governments built extensive networks of highways out of the public purse. Without this network of roads, the bus industry could never have developed. Mr. Gow asked "When was the last time a bus company built a highway? Public transport policy, not the bus industry, must determine the mix of transport modes."

Transport 2000 called for the nationalization of the bus industry to eliminate the bus industry's "monopolistic control" of the transport market in large areas of Canada, to reorder transport policy and eliminate the strong anti-train bias in the Railway Act which allows the abandonment of rail services, to facilitate the coordination of train and bus schedules and to eliminate the duplication of services and schedules between these two modes.

AROUND AMTRAK'S FEBRUARY WEST
by Carl H. Fowler

Amtrak's PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL sat in Vancouver on a clear Feb 20 morning with a consist of conventional equipment, including a lunch-counter diner of Santa Fe origins that featured a fully-staffed kitchen. The normal Amfleet consist had gone to Portland for a Shriners special, but the 3-coach INTERNATIONAL was filled, ran perfectly on time, and made friends for Amtrak, except with the rushed and short-tempered diner crew, who had to deal with a long line demanding takeout foods, and they soon became unnecessarily curt.

The scenery along Puget Sound was ravishing as always, and the perfect weather that had followed me across the Continent continued.

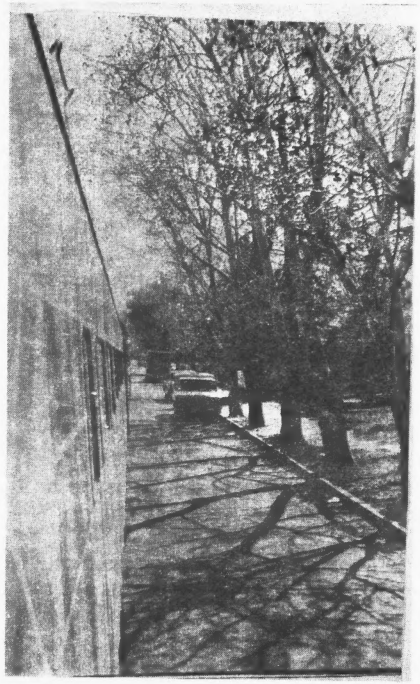
Seattle's King Street Station was jammed with passengers for a 7-coach, 2-sleeper, dome lounge and diner equipped COAST STARLIGHT, and too many of these passengers were already very, very angry with Amtrak. The NORTH COAST HIAWATHA of the previous day had arrived in Seattle around 12:30pm, and Amtrak had refused to make any arrangements of any kind for the large number of passengers who had missed the STARLIGHT. That refusal had included alternative bus tickets, hotel charges, and even advising the passengers destined for Portland and points south that they might have made their connections if they had been bused from Spokane to Portland. While the STARLIGHT looked handsome indeed as it awaited its passengers, tempers were definitely short.

Amtrak's decision to do away with specific coach seat assignments was to play havoc with both the STARLIGHT and the SOUTHWEST LIMITED of the next day, as the first passengers on board spread out over multiple seats, grabbed all windows, and were loudly rude about surrendering their double seats to down-line boarders. Amtrak employees consistently stated that no seats were reserved when passengers complained about the seat problem, but the new assured-seat policy is supposed to include a seat for all, and thus is a reservation on the airline model, and Amtrak employees should enforce the rules.

The train's crew was an odd mixture of panache and utter incompetence. The diner steward coped with the train's huge crowds with lunch and dinner use of reservations, called in the lounge car. This allowed passengers to wait in comfort in the lounge, but the steward handed the reservation numbers to customers with a bark, telling them most abruptly, "Go to the lounge! I'll call you later!" To the furious NORTH COAST HI contingent, this man's manner was a provocation from a company that had already stuck them with sizeable hotel bills, and their complaining was loud and continuous. Loud complaining very quickly ruins the atmosphere of a train, especially if the employees take it as a signal to become abusive in return. Thus the diner became a confrontation scene at dinner. One passenger who had gotten on angry and since become boorishly drunk, made racist remarks in the diner and poisoned the atmosphere for all. Given the strained situation, most of the waiters performed well. My broiled salmon was politely, if inattentively served but had been allowed to get cold in the kitchen.

The STARLIGHT, powered by Amtrak's last FP7s, ran on time to Portland, but there the sad SDP40F dispute made its first appearance in my travels. By Eugene, SP slow orders had the train 30 minutes late, and things looked poor indeed with the mountains ahead. Forty passengers were

on board for the next day's SOUTHWEST LIMITED, but none was told that its L.A. departure had been set back to 8pm, in Amtrak's one and only intelligent scheduling move since the SDP40F dispute began, nor were any advised that they would have a better chance to make the connection by taking the San Joaquin route thru Bakersfield. With the BN's apparent campaign of sabotage of Amtrak operations causing havoc in the West (all on the NORTH COAST had complained of repeated long delays awaiting freights, and 10mph crawls on straight as well as curved track), the utter absence of any Amtrak passenger service staff on the trains only compounds the problems. Service crews have become defensively quiet, and operating crews show no more familiarity with things off their division than ever.



STREET RUNNING ON THE SAN JOAQUIN.
The southbound train--here in pre-Amfleet days--runs down city streets in Fresno, California.
Photo by Message Media.

The BN's victims from No. 9 spread terrible tales of certain missed connections at L.A., of forced hotel bills, despite clearly advertised connections, and no Amtrak employee either defused the rumors or reassured the passengers that in the last week the STARLIGHT had actually made its L.A. connection several times. As it was, this connection was made, at 7:45pm, but the constant tension and complaining on the train could have been dispelled by even minimal public informational gestures, which, for whatever reasons, Amtrak did not make even to its own employees.

Employee morale on the STARLIGHT was poor throughout. After two months of delays, accompanied by no positive word from Amtrak, no promise of schedule adjustments to come, and the final dreadfully wrong decision to pass the costs of delays on to the passengers, the employees were thoroughly demoralized, and only the old SP bar attendant gave anything like brightly attentive service.

Surprisingly, the train was only four minutes late at Oakland, and left on time, altho it would lose 50 minutes between Oakland and L.A. There is plenty of padding in the schedule, at least north of Oakland.

By contrast with the general unhappiness on the COAST STARLIGHT, the SAN JOAQUIN was a model run. The new Amfleet cars drew very favorable passenger response. Except for a few complaints about the fixed armrests, the Amfleet drew high marks for the leg rests, the Amcafe, including food quality, and both the dinette and individual tables. On-time performance was perfect, the HIAWATHA complainers had stayed on the STARLIGHT, and the friendly, outgoing crew announced all stops, meal services, and generally made the good crowd on at Oakland feel most welcome.

Only one negative sign marred this trip, and that was passenger shock at the closure of the Merced station. It was drizzling in Merced that

Sunday, but the locked waiting room offered no shelter to a tour party enroute to Yosemite. Indeed, the Merced loading was the best in the Valley, and this decision appears terribly counter-productive to patronage on the route, discouraging vital and underpromoted tour business and the rapidly growing basic local traffic on the SAN JOAQUIN. Nor can Amtrak's recent rash of Western station closure notices be called all that well-researched. The attempt to close Laramie, Wyoming came to grief when it was discovered that Amtrak had not bothered to notice that the Union Pacific, rather than Amtrak, paid the agent there. The closure of Truckee, California, while undoubtedly very satisfying to the SP, comes when that stop has been woefully underpromoted, and without the provision of even a free station phone for train information.

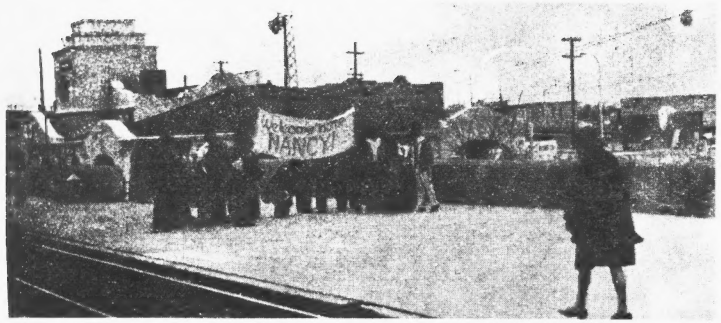
What was most alarming about this Western part of my February trip was the feeling that on the eve of the new bi-levels, Amtrak has given up on long distance services. Disclaimers alleging that the cold was the cause of all of Amtrak's delays were common in all stations, but not so common was any outreach by the company to tell anyone, employees included, the status of the real cause of the delays, the SDP40F dispute, nor any evidence at all of any consideration of reschedulings that might resume connections. Rather, trains were plastered with station-closure notices, connections were missed, even by the seconds with which the SOUTHWEST LIMITED missed the BLUE WATER LIMITED in Chicago the previous week, and the passengers were routinely left holding the tab, forced to shift for themselves at terminals.

ICC regulations supposedly prohibit this sort of anti-passenger move by Amtrak, but evidently the ICC has decided to rain-check this one. It should be added that Amtrak's anti-passenger moves go beyond failing to honor connections. Passengers on the horribly late NORTH COAST HIAWATHA were required to pay for their own meals during the delay. Passengers detraining at Spokane were asked not to go to bed by porters who didn't want to be bothered remaking their beds, even tho the train was not expected at Spokane until after 3am.

Perhaps simply a lack of supervision is at fault. Perhaps a reversal of the short-sighted cost cutting that took the Passenger Agents off all trains two years ago might restore a little esprit? But when the Santa Fe SUPER CHIEF Pleasure Dome is put on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED backwards, as it was on Feb 21, with the seats in the dome covered deeply with filth caused by the installation of new windows, something has really gone wrong, for the SOUTHWEST LIMITED is the one Amtrak train that we all believe is supposed to be immune from the worst of the ravages of Amtrak's apparently upsupervised yard crews.

Train No. 4 ran perfectly on time all the way on this trip, for the Santa Fe does not share the SDP40F hysteria, and the train crew was civil and efficient; but the filth in the backwards Pleasure Dome was a bad sign. Passengers on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED were treated to the best on-board service observed on Amtrak. The bartender, the same unhappy fellow I had ridden with going east a week before, pointed out the Pleasure Dome's inadequate storage capacity for liquor when forced, as it is in the winter, to serve the entire train, but he managed to store adequate supplies in an unoccupied roomette, and gave excellent service. Rushed by happy drinkers leaving L.A., he accepted my offer to clean the seats in the dome, and subsequently passengers were unsettled only by the fact that all of the seats in the car faced backwards.

A crowd that boarded without reservations at Flagstaff caused a bit of a seat dispute. Only two coaches were running to Chicago this trip,



Intercity passenger trains make a significant contribution to the safety, the dignity and the humanity of the American lifestyle that no other transportation mode makes. Here a family in Albuquerque welcomes home a relative off the SOUTHWEST LIMITED in a scene that would not be found by a freeway or airport. Photo by Message Media.

due to a SUNSET LIMITED Mardi Gras Special, but the dispute was resolved before Gallup, and the Santa Fe's superb mainline, at 90mph, is a great show still--plains, mountains and pueblos speeding by in the rich red glow of the Southwest.

In the previous issue I commented that other Amtrak trips, as recently as last October, were not at all like this--that trains ran on time, crews were spirited and service fine, if not really outstanding. Perhaps I am responding too strongly to what all rail supporters hope is a temporary mess for Amtrak, but the corporation cannot delay massive schedule adjustments any longer. In a way, perhaps, this is an opportunity for a nationwide reorganization of schedules that can benefit Amtrak for years to come by putting Eastern long-hauls thru cities like Pittsburgh and Buffalo at reasonable hours. Slowdowns need only be temporary, and the railroads can still be fined if their delays of the past winter prove, as I suspect, to have been frequently unjustified, but something must be done now, before the crowds of summer.

Despite all disasters of the recent winter, patronage continues to increase. Five-minute waits for an agent on the L.A. reservations line are now the rule, and staff there has been increased. But Amtrak must actively resume both supervising its employees and running its trains on time, if it is to survive and fourish.

Editor's Note: Since the above article was written, Amtrak has prepared revised nationwide schedules to restore connections between affected trains, effective Apr 24. See page 14 for details.

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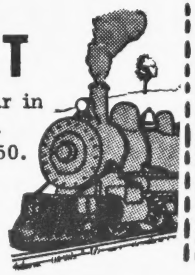

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LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

The latest Amtrak ridership figures, for Jan and Feb, are shown below. Because these months were ones of numerous train annulments, it is hard to compare figures from one route to another, and so we have not ranked the long-distance trains as we usually do, but instead listed them in the order in which Amtrak's Market Research Department presents them. See the First Feb RTN for earlier data.

LONG DISTANCE TRAINS

NOS.	TRAIN NAME	JAN	FEB
	Florida Trains*	20,801	17,956
40-41	BROADWAY LIMITED	15,708	10,691
30-31	NATIONAL LIMITED	12,606	8,971
56-57	FLORIDIAN	6,598	4,474
58-59	PANAMA LIMITED	13,194	13,064
3-4	SOUTHWEST LIMITED	20,150	14,649
5-6	SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR	17,297	15,897
7-8	EMPIRE BUILDER	23,075	17,901
9-10	NORTH COAST HIAWATHA	14,243	9,573
15-16	LONE STAR	14,881	11,825
1-2	SUNSET LIMITED	6,692	6,037
50-51	JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY	7,527	6,345
54-55	MOUNTAINEER	2,208	1,548
60-61	MONTREALER**	27,112	24,986
11-14	COAST STARLIGHT	33,588	27,371
21-22	INTER-AMERICAN	2,568	871
68-69	ADIRONDACK	7,822	7,584
48-49	LAKE SHORE LIMITED	18,457	11,941
89-90	PALMETTO	9,978	7,199
166/7	COLONIAL	4,094	3,727
32-33	SHENANDOAH	2,903	--
	NY-LA thru car via KC	324	235
	First Class Total:	31,888	24,792
	Coach Class Total:	291,540	233,964
	Combined Total:	323,428	258,756

*Average of 3 trains. **Incl. NE Corr. psrs

SHORT DISTANCE TRAINS

ROUTE	JAN	FEB
NYC - DC Metroliner	160,050	150,137
Northeast Corridor*	638,146	577,905
NYC - Harrisburg	16,671	14,374
Phila - Harrisburg	71,067	63,503
Springfield - New Haven	21,388	19,811
Washington - Cumberland	15,164	14,704+
NYC - Albany - Buffalo	47,959	38,260
Chicago - St. Louis	17,638	16,221
Chicago - Milwaukee	19,189	18,393
Chicago - Detroit	24,485	21,118
Chicago - Carbondale	11,111	9,494
Chicago - Quincy	7,801	6,063
Los Angeles - San Diego	41,401	45,642
Seattle - Portland	10,843	10,056
Seattle - Vancouver	5,770	5,084
Chicago - Dubuque	1,412	1,916
Oakland - Bakersfield	6,556	5,725
Chicago - Port Huron	5,055	5,199
Jackson - Detroit	5,784	6,268
Minneapolis - Superior	2,410	4,157++
DC - Springfield thru car	1,882	1,497
First Class Total:	28,359	25,774
Coach Class Total:	1,103,423	1,009,753
Combined Total:	1,131,782	1,035,527
Special Trains:	4,247	1,900

*DC-NYC-Boston; & NYC-Springfield
+Washington-Martinsburg. ++Minn.-Duluth.

TIMESAVER:

In order to obtain all the information you receive in one issue of Rail Travel News, you'd have to read many newspapers and magazines daily and be on the mailing lists of numerous public transportation agencies. Even then you wouldn't get the many tidbits of news contributed continuously by many scores of rail observers. Get RTN in your own mailbox regularly--24 issues per year for just $9.00. Write: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. You'll be glad you did!

ACROSS CANADA ON CP RAIL 1977

by Carl H. Fowler

Windsor Station in Montreal in mid-February was covered with a news letter called "Town Train News" which, rather than promoting the merit of CP Rail's spotless, efficiently run commuter service, announced the imminent demise of about 40% of present runs. All RDC operation would be terminated, and only one train a day would run thru to the end of the line at Rideau. CP Rail explained that, while patronage had remained steady, revenue increases had not kept pace with costs, and as the Montreal commuter services were completely unsubsidized, they were now "unavoidably" to be trimmed.

Today's unavoidable trim may be tomorrow's point of compromise, a less prominently displayed was a CPR announcement of a postponement most of the cutbacks until October, to allow the Quebec Provincial Gove ment, newly in power, time to work out a formula for continued service.

CP Rail employees across Canada continously complained about how much better service used to be, and this reporter did encounter awesom service on the 40 year old cars that made up the 1967 EXPO LIMITED, but a February, 1977 visit on CP Rail found the old CPR standards surprisingly well maintained. The Town-Train commuter service is a case in point.

The 9:30 PM train out of Montreal, five RDC cars, purportedly doome because of their high maintenance costs (is there an irony in the notion that the bidirectional RDC, once the local service savior, is now unsupportable to CPR management), left on time and full. Cars were hygieni cally clean, glass windows (no Lexan anywhere in Canada) spotless, and the French-speaking crew were courteous and efficient in collecting tickets. The entire run was made on time.

Bridge repairs on the crossing to the "Island" east of Montreal, delay edthe 9:58 am RDC run from Hudson back into Montreal, but delays do n go unexplained on CPR. Posted both in stations and on trains was a com plete explanation of the delay (all of 5 minutes) and an appology.

The legendary CP Rail Train Number 1, the CANADIAN, arrived one minute early at Dorval, pulled by an aged, smoking FP7, and two even n tired looking steam boiler-equipped GP7s. This power held together as far as North Bay without incident, altho the crew conplained that deferre maintenance of passenger power had become epidemic in the past year as the CPR awaits the creation of VIA Rail Canada.

The 1977 CANADIAN has shrunk to a rock-bottom consist, and CP Rail's much-higher- than-CN fare policies seem to have driven the avera Canadian to the CN. One coach, with a single baggage dorm, made up th consist of the CANADIAN on February 16 out of Montreal. Passenger count was under ten. This incredibly low level of patronage would continue as far as Winnipeg. West of Thunder Bay there were nine revenue passengers, with another coach and sleeper.

I found this poor usage deeply disturbing, for even if CP Rail has not heavily advertised the CANADIANin recentyears, and has set excessively high fares in an attempt to recapture its 20% share of the losses, the basics of the great manner of rail travel are remarkable intact on the CANADIAN.

The quasi- ala carte dinner menu is spartan. Three entrees are offered at each meal, and do not change as the train crosses the country, except that nightly specials, including a $9.50 steak dinner, are added,

and do change daily. But while this menu is very much reduced from the encyclopedia of railroad food the CPR offered in 1967, the quality is remarkably high.

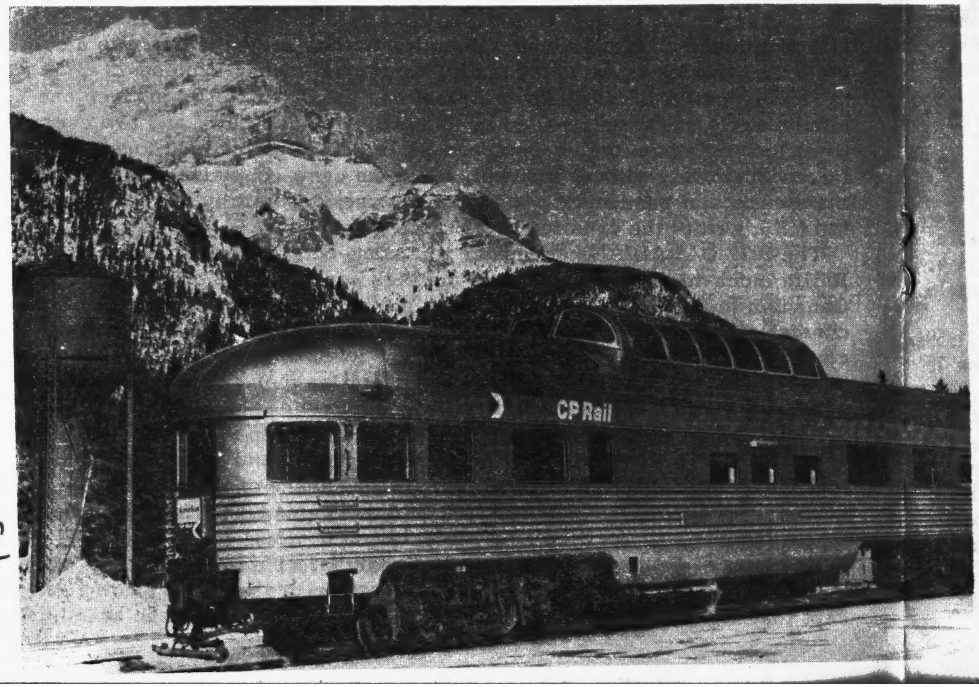
Tables are set with heavy, monogrammed silver. Flowers are fresh. Seafood was a treat(really all fish), all the way. A broiled pike enjoyed on the shores of Lake Superior was fresh, perfectly cooked and absolutely bountiful in quantity. Poached salmon was served with an excellent, made to order, Hollandaise. Dinner was followed by complimentary chocolates; wine was universally consumed; and service, at least east of Winnipeg, could not have been improved, being at all times quiet, unobtrusive, and deferential.

The French Canadian crew out of Montreal turned back with their diner at North Bay, but the Toronto diner picked up there offered more of the old CPR service that evoked haunting recollections of the standards of a great hotel of 20 years ago.

How much of this reflects official company policy and how much is characteristic of superb old-line employees maintaining standards for their own pride is hard to judge.

The Montreal to North Bay steward distributed CP Rail maps on request. These maps were formerly placed in the lounges, but that nice touch had only been sporadically observed in recent months, so the steward had picked up his own stock of the maps from the Montreal commissary. On the other hand, the lounge was fully stocked with magazines, newspapers, including air mail editions of the Manchester Guardian, and mongrammed CP Rail stationery. Timetables were in all racks, cocktail menus at the seats in the observation, and the bar attendents not only mixed some drinks like martinis to order, but would still provide at-the-seat service, a touch utterly dead on Amtrak except in the sleeper lounges of a few Eastern trains.

The M&O Division from Montreal to Ottawa never had much freight service and has not received its former standard of passenger maintenance, but continuous 90 mph running was attained on it nevertheless. A steam line severed in a snowfield a half hour out of Vanleek Hill, but the 10-minute delay it caused was made up before the second stop west of Ottawa. However, this was not to be an on-time run for the CANADIAN.



A freight had derailed just west of Cartier and the train was delayed at Cartier for five hours while the wreck was holed thru. It was gorgeously clear all the way across Canada, but intensely cold in the East, and a broken rail was about to cause even further delay. The train arrived 4 and a half hours late at White River and sat for another two and a half hours while crews gingerly raised a tank car of propane which had just missed a trestle whenit fell down an embankment a couple of hundred yards west of the Terrace Bay station. At Winnipeg we were 8 hrs late.

The delay was not accompanied by rude grumbling by the CPR crews. Non-technical explanations were given out over the P.A., and the sleeping car conductor(they still exist in Canada) saw to it that any passenger who was on the train for a meal he would not normally have eaten was treated to food on the house in the diner.

The superb eastern service crews changed at Winnipeg, and a young diner crew boarded there, and allowed standards to slip to something closely akin to good Amtrak levels, no rudeness, but not much interest. While specials were still available on the evening menu, they were not inserted into the menus, and had to be asked after. The lounge attendant was reluctant to concoct an orangeaid, but to compensate, the train crew got even better. A traiman boarding at Moose Jaw sold a lovely reproduction of an 1892 CPR mile-by-mile descriptive folder which proved fascinating during the unusual daylight ride thru the Fraser Canyon the next day. This gentleman showed pictures of a 21-car CANADIAN of 1971 and urged the passengers (now more than 60) to tell their friends and MPs, if they wished

Above, the westbound CANADIAN leaves Calgary. CP's "Calgary Tower" looms in the background. Left, the eastbound CANADIAN pauses at Banff. Photos by Glenn Lee.

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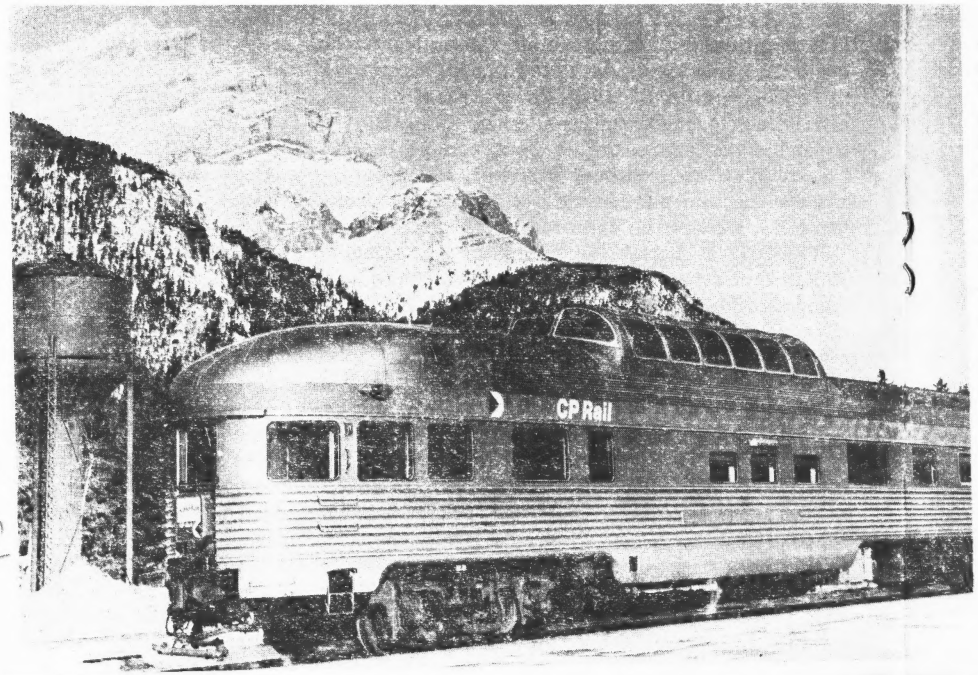

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Above, the westbound CANADIAN leaves Calgary. CP's "Calgary Tower" looms in the background. Left, the eastbound CANADIAN pauses at Banff. Photos by Glenn Lee.

the CANADIAN to survive. Possessed of a pass to the CP Calgary Tower, this remarkable representative of the CPR advised the lounge crowd that he would treat them to the normal $1.50 charge to view the scene from the tower during the layover in Calgary, and allowed his pass to be the medium for four passengers to see the amazing view and become firm friends of the CPR, while the train made a 30-minute layover in Calgary. As we passed thru the spiral tunnels east of Field, even in the dark, the snow-covered spectral mountains were made vivid and fascinating by this man's commentary.

A few other notes on CPR are also in order.

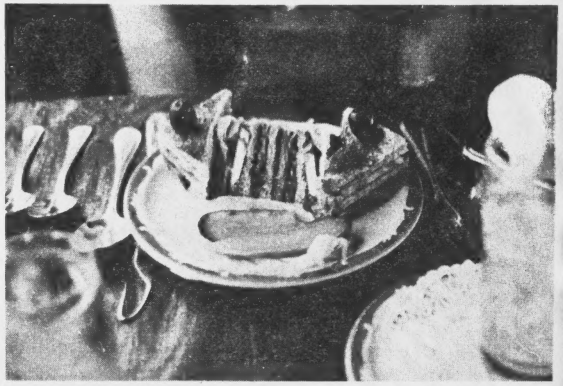


Photo captions: Left--lunch on the CANADIAN. Right the East presents many captivating views as well. Lake Superior. Photos by Paul Rayton.

AMTRAK SPRINGS AHEAD WITH

With the spring Daylight Saving Time changeover on Apr 24, Amtrak is making some important schedule alterations. The major reason for them is to re-establish connections between some long-distance trains that were broken or made tenuous by the slowed running times of SDP40F-equipped trains. In addition, there are some faster running times in the system, and some changes made to establish better service or better arrival and departure hours in some locations. Following is a summary of changes announced by Amtrak in mid-April:

BROADWAY LTD: lv NY 2:30pm, ar Chicago 8:30am; lv Chicago 7:30pm, ar NY 4:17pm (our last issue had a typographical error in the above times). Now an overnight train Chic-Pittsburgh and a daytime train Pittsburgh-NY; maintains connections in Chicago with rescheduled Western trains.

NATIONAL LTD: lv NY 6:10pm, ar Columbus 7:55am, ar Kansas City 11:05pm; lv K.C. 7am, ar Columbus 11:35pm, ar NY 2:10pm. Serves Columbus and Dayton at reasonable hours, has better pattern St. Louis-K.C., and reduced connecting time with #3 & 4.

EMPIRE BUILDER: lv Chicago 1:40pm, ar Minneapolis 11:59pm, ar Seattle 3:35pm; lv Seattle 11:55am, ar Minneapolis 6:25am, ar Chicago 5:15pm.

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA: lv Chicago 9:30am, ar Minneapolis 8:05pm, ar Seattle 11:59am Lv Seattle 3:40pm, ar Minneapolis 11am, ar Chicago 10:05pm. Will run daily Jun 15 thru Sep 7. These two Seattle trains reflect longer running times.

COAST STARLIGHT: lv Seattle 11:05am, ar Oakland 7:40am, ar L.A. 6:55pm; lv L.A. 10am, ar Oakland 8:45pm, ar Seattle 6:20pm. Longer running time Oakland-L.A.

SOUTHWEST LIMITED: eastbound train lvs L.A. ½-hr earlier (7:30pm) and reaches Chicago ½-hr earlier (1:35pm). Minor intermediate time adjustments.

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR: lv Chicago 4pm, ar Oakland 3:30pm; lv Oakland 1pm, ar Chicago 3:35pm. Becomes afternoon departure from Oakland for first time; longer running times; will connect both ways with PIONEER at Ogden, after Jun 7 startup.

SUNSET LIMITED: lv New Orleans 11:50am, ar L.A. 7:30am; lv L.A. 9:30pm, ar New Orleans 8:30pm; about 1 hr longer each way; intermediate time adjustments.

Everything on the CANADIAN works: lights, all switches, recorded music, train P.A., and basic service standards. Shoes were shined by the porters, track was --west of Ottawa--very smooth, and general spirit and polish were displayed throughout the run. CPR may be guilty of high fares, maintenance by cannibalizing otherwise superb and serviceable dome cars, and a variety of other anti-passenger sins; but if one knew nothing of the CPR service of yesterday, present CPR service would make a remarkably convincing case for travel on the steamcars.

--while Western Canada is renowned for its scenery, Here, dome car riders view the north shoreline of

BIG SCHEDULE CHANGES

PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL: lv Vancouver 6:15am (PDT), ar Seattle 10:45am; lv Seattle 6:45pm, ar Vancouver 11:30pm (PDT). Time changed to maintain connection with rescheduled COAST STARLIGHT.

PIONEER: train 26 replaces the southbd PUGET SOUND (lv Seattle 7:30am, ar Portland 11:20am), train 25 replaces northbd MOUNT RAINIER (lv Portland 5:30pm, ar Seattle 9:20pm). This in anticipation of Jun 7 startup of complete route to Salt Lake City. Times are changed from present trains.

LONE STAR: lv Chicago 4:30pm, ar Houston 7:45pm; ar Ft. Worth 1:40pm, ar Dallas 2:36pm; lv Dallas 12:25pm, lv Ft. Worth 1:20pm; lv Houston 7:10am, ar Chic 10:25am. Slightly longer running times.

INTER-AMERICAN: lv Laredo 9:55am, ar St. Louis 2pm. Shorter running time northbd.

PALMETTO: lv Richmond 2:30pm, ar Savannah 10:55pm; lv Savannah 8am, ar Richmond 4:20pm. Shorter running time.

FLORIDA TRAINS: some minor speedups and slowdowns.

CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE TURBOLINERS: some shifts as a result of EMPIRE BUILDER and NORTH COAST changes.

SAN DIEGANS: fifth train added (see details last issue).

LAKE SHORE LIMITED: lv Chicago ½-hour later than present; connect with #3 & 4.

Not all schedule changes are available as we go to press. Amtrak said about 60 trains altogether would have changes.

NEW STATION STOPS: Dowagiac MI on Chicago-Detroit route, 11:59am west, 7:32pm east. Rosenberg TX on LONE STAR and SUNSET LIMITED. Seligman AZ on SOUTHWEST LIMITED. Thurmond WV on JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY. Port Kent NY and Westmount, Quebec on ADIRONDACK. Rockville and Gaithersburg MD weekends on the BLUE RIDGE. EMPIRE BUILDER stops at Browning MT thru May 13; from May 14 thru Sep 17, stops at Glacier Park instead, then back to Browning effective Sep 18.

SAN JOAQUIN: San Francisco bus connection changed; lv S.F. 9:05am; ar S.F. 6:20pm.

AMTRAK MEETS THE GREYHOUND

Excerpts from Paul Reistrup's Mar 24 letter
to Greyhound President James R. Kerrigan

I understand your frustration with Amtrak, but I also have to say at the same time you are swinging at the wrong target. Look at it this way: You are in the transportation business in a broad, rich country with one of the most mobile populations in the world. You carry 2% of the intercity travelers in your ultra-modern buses, and you serve 15,000 cities and towns over an unparalleled system of public highways. Across the street is a struggling railroad passenger system which serves just 1% of the intercity travelers and connects only 500 cities on a private, fixed route. On the other hand, 87% of the potential customers for both you and your railroad competitor don't ride either in buses or trains--they ride in their private automobiles.

Don't you see the tragedy of buses and railroads fighting between themselves for the scraps of intercity travel that we now get almost by default? Our problem isn't that we compete or even that we compete unfairly, it's that we--buses, trains, airplanes and subway cars-- do not compete enough! We don't need fewer trains, we need more trains and better trains.

The best thing in the world for your buses would be a fine modern rail passenger system linking major metropolitan areas and carrying many, many times the number of passengers that Amtrak carries today; the kind of rail system that exists now in every progressive country in the world except this one. That kind of a system would need a complementary bus and mass transit system equally as vigorous and efficient because train riders ride buses and bus riders ride trains, but automobile passengers don't ride anything but automobiles.

That's where they are--in those automobiles; the most seductive, destructive and expensive form of transportation ever invented--at least the way we use it in this country.

I'm not outlawing the automobile. It is essential for many purposes. But where the private car has become dominant--as it has here--it drives out and destroys every other choice of transportation even when the other modes, like buses, trains or rapid transit, might be much cheaper, more efficient and even more fun if they were given a real chance to flourish.

Look at the true costs of transportation for a minute because ultimately that's what it all comes down to. You implied in your statement that one group of Americans is paying all the bills and another group gets all the benefits. The fact is all of the bills for all public and private services are paid out of the earned income of all of us Americans, and we all stand to share in the benefits as we can or choose to use them.

By the way, who do you think paid for the passenger train losses of $400 million a year before Amtrak was created? The public did thru the increased cost of goods resulting from higher freight rates.

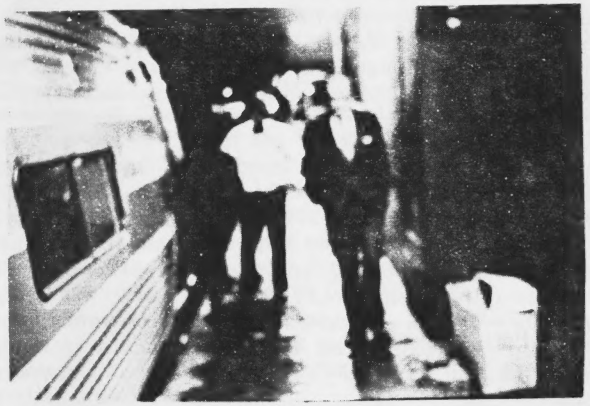
Now we Americans travel--almost 90%--by car. That's got to be costly in terms of initial expense, operating costs, fees, insurance, highway and street construction and repair, police and court systems, loss of life and injuries, land lost from tax rolls, pollution, use of irreplaceable resources and, finally, use of energy. And don't kid yourself that since the monster is already paid for we might as well use it. It isn't paid for, it all has to be renewed, replaced and maintained every year and that gets more expensive every year.

You have attacked Amtrak forcefully and frequently. It seems to me you make two or three basic arguments that should be addressed specif-

ically because underlying principles can easily be misunderstood:

(1) You said: "We have a national passenger railway system used by only 17 million people...paid for by nearly 100 million taxpayers who don't ride the train."

Actually, 18.6 million persons rode Amtrak trains in 1976, and during Amtrak's first 5-1/2 years the taxpayers paid $1 billion for the system--about $200 million a year. For that average of $1 per year per U.S.



A thoughtful Amtrak President Paul Reistrup, appearing to be pondering the future of Amtrak, detrains from an Amclub car in New York's Penn Station on Apr 1, 1976. Photo: Message Media.

citizen, we saved a transportation system which would cost $100 billion to replace, and we have something to build on for the future.

(2) You said: "We give $24 in tax money to every Amtrak rider who stepped aboard the train in 1976."

The federal subsidy for each Amtrak passenger is at this high level now. At this stage of development of our national rail passenger network, these costs stem from the necessity to maintain what is still a very costly and inefficient system and build an expensive new system to replace it before we have the volume of passengers needed to produce higher revenue. As modernization allows us to carry more passengers cheaper, the gap between ticket income and costs will narrow. But there is another side to this argument. Only a child really believes that the cost of a ticket pays for the cost of the ride on any form of public transportation...

(3) You said: "Greyhound is having its own tax dollar used against it to support Amtrak."

This is interesting because it makes the implication that the bus industry "pays its way." That isn't even close to being true. Greyhound's latest report to the ICC lists all taxes paid, including social security payments ($19 million), income tax ($11.2 million) and payments to states ($17.5 million) along with the $3.1 million which goes to the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Little of this could conceivably reach Amtrak.

(4) You contend that the troubles of the motorbus industry result from "unfair" competition from Amtrak; that we are taking away that "21st rider" who makes a bus profitable.

That isn't close to being reasonable. The buses had their best years back before the automobile took over, when buses and trains were both carrying largenumbers of passengers. Then rail and bus traffic began to decline, and bus traffic has not yet reversed itself. That pattern can be reversed for buses as it has been for trains, but not by sacrificing the only other viable form of public ground transportation in the vain hope that some of our lost passengers will wander over to your buses. They won't...

(5) Throughout your essay , there was a constant and clearly negative reference to "subsidies."

I've often wondered why $450 billion for highways is an "investment" while $1 billion to a rail passenger system is a "subsidy." The names for these various costs may change but the people who pay remain the same--us.

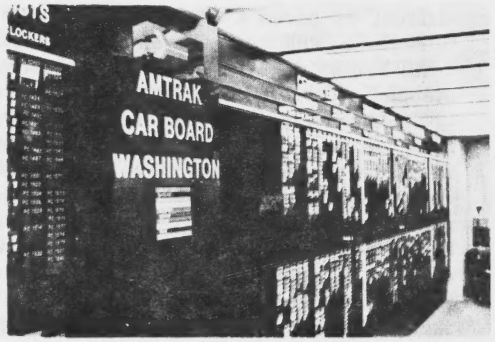
...Greyhound's 1976 corporate statement showed another decline in passenger traffic--this time 15%. We're not gloating. We're worried. America needs a strong expanding bus system. Without one, no matter how we improve our service, Amtrak could become stranded, cut off from millions of potential customers and providing only a partial service.

CARS & CONSISTS

*MONTREALER, train 60, Philadelphia Apr 1: engine 920 (GG-1); cars 1512, 2236 "Magnolia Gardens," 2601 "Pacific Beach," 8338, 3302, 5275, 5404, 6018, 6073, 5661, 6022, 5805, 4451, 3952, 1169. Last 6 cars removed at New York.

*CANADIAN, CP train 1, Sudbury Mar 26: engines 1403, 1432; cars 613 bag, 121 coach, 605 Skyline, "Acadian" diner, "Hunter Manor" sleeper, "Riding Mountain Park" observation. Train 2, Winnipeg Apr 8: engines 1404 (FP7), 1432 (FP9); cars 617 bag-dorm, 120 & 124 coaches, 513 Skyline, "Empress" diner, "Chateau Papineau" & "Bayfield Manor" sleepers, "Assiniboine Park" observation.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Apr 12: engines 569, 547; cars 1028, 1555, 5231, 4886, 4532, 4506, 8106, 4510, 4495, 9372, 8037, 2753 "Palm Leaf," 2710 "Pine Arroyo," 2268 "Placid Valley", deadhead 4519. (#11 arrived 6hrs late due to frt derail in Oregon; stub train ran Oakland-L.A. with engine 516 (new paint); cars 4505, 7523, 7524, 8104, 7520, 7504, SP office car 131 "Sacramento.")



Amtrak keeps track of its cars at headquarters with this Car Board. Individual cards with car numbers attach to board to show present car location. Photo: Message Media.

*LONE STAR, train 15, Chillicothe IL Apr 8: engines 512, 504; cars 1173, 2750 "Palm Arch," dome 9201 "Starlight Dome," 8039, 3390, 9911, 9952, 9913, 2371 "Regal Vale," ATSF office car 50 deadhead to Topeka.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, New Orleans Apr 8: engines 566, 545; cars 2261 "Placid Harbor" (buffer), 1058, 9905, 9960, 9950, 9910, 3393, 8500, 2508 "Blue Water," 2367 "Regal River," 2505 "Blue Mott," 2351 "Regal Inn," 2784 "Seminole County."

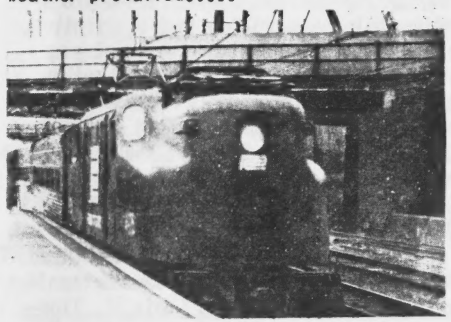
*ADIRONDACK, train 69, Croton-Harmon Mar 30: Turbo power car 157, coaches 184 & 185, food service car 186, power car 155.

*NIAGARA RAINBOW, train 63, Croton-Harmon Mar 30: engines PC 5052, PC 5047 (FL9s); cars 1603, 6400-series coach, 3321 "Molly Pitcher," 6440.

*STATESMAN, train 186, NY Apr 5: engine 973 (E60), changed to 201 (F40) at New Haven; cars 20145 Amclub, 21123, 21158, 21056, 21078, 21066, 20024 Amcafe, 21014. Last 3 cars became train 142 at New Haven, with engine 499 (E9).

Mixed Train of Thoughts

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME begins at 2am on Sunday, Apr 24, with clocks moved forward one hour, until Oct 30 when they are set back again. DST is observed in the U.S. and its territories except Arizona, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and the portion of Indiana that is in the Eastern time zone. These areas don't observe DST at all..... THE STEAM EXCURSION on Amtrak with the 4449 has pulled big crowds of riders all along the line. The only report on the train's operation--it is now in progress--is that the 4449 apparently blew a boiler tube somewhere in the early portion of the trip and had to be pulled by a diesel. The engine was repaired shortly after, at least before San Antonio. And the Heart of Dixie RR Club ran its own 4449 excursion Birmingham-Chattanooga on Apr 2-3. Consist of the special train was 4449 engine and tender, (rest are SR equipment) watertank 52, AFT 76 tool car (from Freedom Train), 2422 "Lake Pearl", 726, 820, 830, 1042, 1043, 1041, 1034, 1039, 1036, HofD RR Club 2202 (ex-IC, ex-MP dome coach), HofD 4527 commissary car, 1602 parlor dome, 1067, 3659, 1081, 1086, and 1069 open coach "Missionary Ridge." The two trips were sellouts, with over 800 passengers each, including E. M. Frimbo, David P. Morgan, and the Mayor of Birmingham. Cloudy, rainy weather prevailed.....


GG-1 NUMBER 4935 (pictured here at Trenton in Corridor service in Dec, 1975--Fred Matthews photo), now being repainted as a railfan project, will be rededicated May 15 at 12 noon at Washington Union Station. Speakers will be Amtrak's Paul Reistrup and engine body designer Raymond Loewy. After the ceremony, the engine will have an "inaugural" run DC-NY with train 160, the MURRAY HILL (lv DC 3:05pm, ar NY 7pm).....

NARP HAS CALLED for an increased Amtrak capital expenditures budget of $500 million for Fiscal 1978 (starting next Oct), and sent President Carter and Secretary Adams a mailgram to that effect recently. The Ohio and Michigan ARPs in a joint meeting in Toledo (reported in the Toledo Blade) unanimously called for a telegram to Washington to ask for an even higher capital budget of $1 billion, in part to cover deferred maintenance on tracks Amtrak must use. NARP told the President "We believe that circumstances warrant a bold commitment by you towards improving our nationwide rail passenger network, making it a vital alternative for countless trips now made unnecessarily and uneconomically by automobile." Carter's budget has only $105 for capital improvements, and rail supporters point out that new low-level cars are desperately needed for Eastern routes. Amtrak has noted that add-on orders could be readily placed now with car builders if Amtrak had more funds for new cars..... IF IT NEEDED proof that new cars in the right place equal more riders, the Western corridors keep giving it. In March the SAN DIEGANS had a 93% ridership increase over Mar 1976, the biggest such jump since the startup of Amtrak six years ago. The Portland-Seattle trains had 40% increases the same month, and the poor little SAN JOAQUIN increased a sizeable 42%. Amtrak finds in surveys that these new riders are coming from automobiles and not from other public transport modes, contrary to what Greyhound seems to think..... AMTRAK MARCH RIDERSHIP, in preliminary figures, increased systemwide 6.4% over Mar 1976, with 1,550,000 passengers last month compared to 1,457,000 riders the year earlier.....

SCIENTISTS WHO STUDY social behavior long ago discovered that the most effective way to persuade people of your point of view is to present both sides of the argument. Either the authors of the anti-Amtrak article in the April Reader's Digest never learned this or they deliberately ignored it (perhaps the other side of the argument would be too persuasive!). No article in recent years raised our blood pressure as much as "Time to Get Amtrak on Track" by husband and wife team Earl & Miriam Selby. The main point of the article isthat Amtrak is costing too much of the taxpayer's money (see QUOTES, p. 21). The uninformed (does Reader's Digest assume they constitute most of its readership?) would be swayed by the shocking figures which are presented entirely out of context, with no comparison. The most mysterious thing is that Roger Lewis is referred to extensively, with only a passing reference to Paul Reistrup--how up-to-date can you be? It's an article that William Coleman might have wanted to plant. Fortunately it falls in the back pages of the magazine, where many might miss it. One more comment: the story says that Ted Kennedy believed the "jet airplane has solved our long-distance needs." It seems to us that it only made problems worse; by taking away business traffic from trains, it killed them off and forced more people onto the highways, thus creating the automobile problem we have now..... AND SPEAKING OF the Reader's Digest, an official from that publication was one of the 5 commissioners who studied the Postal Service's problems and just concluded that we need higher postal rates soon, but not of course for the Reader's Digest and similar low-postage publications. Rail Travel News readers are helping subsidize that publication, and will probably be asked to pay more for first class postage late next year, meaning another increase in RTN subscription rates that could force us out of business. Two other commissioners, both Congressman presumably representing the common man--us--voted against the report but were outnumbered by big businessmen in the group. There ain't no justice. (By our own quick tally of the April issue, 27% of the Digest's advertising revenue comes from highway-oil interests, none from railroading)..... MYSTERIOUS GOINGS-ON: On Mar 31 the SR's SOUTHERN CRESCENT arrived in New Orleans with SR office car #7 bearing an unidentified Amtrak Vice President, and the car went back to Washington Apr 4. On Apr 7 the CRESCENT arrived New Orleans with SR office car #1 on the rear. The next day the car was found secluded in SR's office car park at the end of their St. Louis St. line--a city freight branch with a park for office cars in the heart of downtown New Orleans, with SR offices located in an adjoining office building at St. Louis St. and Basin St. Occupant of the car was said to be Amtrak's Paul Reistrup. If he was there for the Mardi Gras, he was over six weeks late, quips an observer. The office car #1 returned to Washington Apr 11. A later report indicates that Amtrak's Dave Watts and family were occupying the #7 car earlier.....

* * *

HUMORIST ART BUCHWALD on Apr 3 wrote a column about the SST. A State Dept. official decides to let the Concorde land at Kennedy airport but not take off from there. To solve the dilemma, the plane is to be loaded on a Metroliner and moved to Washington to Dulles Airport to take off. Amtrak agrees to this, but can't guarantee the plane will fit thru the Baltimore tunnel without some damage to it... AMTRAK BACKED DOWN on its plan for a new St. Louis station when Senator Eagleton threatened to cut back Amtrak funding unless the rail corporation agreed to continue to occupy the historic station. The old but architecturally unique building needs repairs, notes a reader: an interior roof leaks so badly that the floor was covered with ice this winter. A month ago a prankster changed the INTER-AMERICAN's arrival time on the schedule board to over 5 hours later than actual time, and as of last observation it hadn't been corrected..... THE NIGHT OWL got a new welcome-aboard folder recently, with a black and brown owl pictured on the cover over the wording, "the train that goes by night to stretch your day"... AN AMTRAK CABOOSE, freshly-painted car #14011, was recently seen outside the Wilmington shops. It had bright orange sides with blue roof and trim, and a red-white-and-blue Amtrak logo under one window..... AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING for April was delayed to the 22nd to wait until after Pres. Carter's energy speech. On the agenda this time were construction of a new Canton OH station; refurbishing of the North Philadelphia station; right-of-way improvements in the NE Corridor; a call for 10 new locomotives (F40-like units) to accompany the 40 SDPs being rebuilt; a report on converting 10 E8 units into steam generator cars; an LRC update; and a report on the ongoing modification of two sleepers into electric power for trains such as the NIGHT OWL and PANAMA (the NIGHT OWL is using steam-heated sleepers along with a steam-generating loco or steam car, plus electric power for the accompanying Amfleet cars). If the sleeper rebuilding is successful, Amtrak will consider doing 25 more such cars..... NO MAJOR PROBLEMS have cropped up in the bi-level car construction, Amtrak said, even tho the cars are a bit behind schedule. Amtrak still expects them approximately on schedule.....

WARD ALLAN HOWE, noted rail travel writer, died Apr 19 at the age of 77. As a New York Times writer and free-lancer, he delighted many with his travel writings. He never flew or drove a car, using the train as his main means of locomotion, and a bus as a "last resort"..... DOME COACH SERVICE on the SF ZEPHYR has resumed from Chicago to Denver. The ex-SCL lounges once standard on the train have recently been supplemented by ex-UP CHALLENGER lounge and a nicely refurbished "Chessie Club" lounge still featuring its counter and curved sofas and alcoves. The SFZ has reportedly excellent loadings this days--on Apr 12 5 coaches and 3 sleepers were filled eastbound out of Denver..... THE WASHINGTON STAR this month charged that DOT Secretary Adams is making it difficult for reporters to get information out of his department. But a Northwestern columnist called the charge a "cheap shot", noting that Adams is continually surrounded by media representatives.....

SOME FREE CREDIT courtesy of Amtrak: a reader charged a dinner on an Amtrak train on his BankAmericard in Dec 1975 and wasn't billed for it until Feb 1977... THE DOT ANNOUNCED Apr 11 release of a publication "A Nation in Motion: Historic American Transportation Sites", listing hundreds of such sites. The DOT failed to say how to obtain the 136-page booklet, but you might try writing to DOT, Washington DC 20590..... AMTRAK IS PUBLISHING a new ad for the USA Rail Pass, titled the "Amtrak $165 Geography Course", with a cartoon map of the U.S. and railroad tracks running all around to various tourist locations.....

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"In retrospect, Roger Lewis admits that the concept of a national grid was a mistake. He believes that Amtrak should develop a 'three-hour railroad'--passenger service restricted to heavily populated corridors such as the East Coast, around Chicago, and the West Coast. Yet Congress has decreed that the system add at least one new route a year, and Paul H. Reistrup, who became Amtrak's President in 1975, talks of it as 'expanding.'... if Amtrak shrank its long-distance operation, it would have the money to improve service on the more traveled routes."

--Earl and Miriam Selby in Reader's Digest, April.

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RAIL FANTRIPS

Chessie Steam Specials for 150th birthday: 8 trips: May 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29. Most 1-day tours are different, all in Maryland region. Use 4-8-4 #2101. Adult $20 (exc. $18 May 28&29), child $18/$16. Info: Steam Special, Box CJ. 2 N. Charles St., Baltimore MD 21201. Snack service, photo run-bys, taping. Phone 301-237-3737.

June 5: Alpena MI-Mackinaw City MI, RT, on Detroit & Mackinac Rwy, 8am-8pm. $20 includes light breakfast & sandwiches in diner. Modern coaches, club coach, ex-MLW diner. Info: Don Parteka, WATZ Radio, Alpena MI 49707. 175-mile round trip.

June 25 & 26: 2 one-day excursions St. Louis-Mt. Vernon IL, SR engine 4501 & usual consist. Adult $21, 2-11 $19 ($2 more after Jun 10). Sponsor: St. Louis NRHS & Amer. Ass'n Railroaders. "Steam Returns 1977" 4253 Neosho Ave, St. Louis MO 63116.

May 7: RT from Ottawa, Canada, lv 8:30am, return 6pm EDT. RDC car excursion on CP Maniwaki Branch (may be abandoned). Adult $15, kid $10, box lunch $2. Bytown Rwy Society, 93 O'Connor St, Ottawa Ont. K1P 5M8. Phone 613-234-7274. U.S. add 25¢.

May 1: CN 4-8-2 #6060, Montreal-Sorel RT, 112 miles. Runbys, snack service, old-style coaches, open-door baggage, 3-hr layover. Lv 9am, return 5:15pm. Adult $10.90 kid $5.90. St. Lawrence Valley Rwy Soc., Box 400, Cote-des-Neiges, Montreal H3S2S7.

May 14-15: 2-day Montreal-Toronto RT with CN 6060, night in Lord Simcoe Hotel, return behind diesel. Lv Central Station 7:30am (lv Dorval 8am), return 7:55pm. Snack service, meal stops. $69.90 double, $39.90 Sat. only. Same address as above.

One special Fantrips listing is free, subject to our editing. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RAIL FANS ONLY! It's easy to secure your AMTRAK & CN reservations and tickets (or USA Rail Pass)--from anywhere in the world. Tickets by mail from GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., San Francisco 94105, or call (415) 398-2994.

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TIMETABLES - Selling "Best of 60's" Ten System TTs - $10. SSAE for new list quarterly. Carl Loucks, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

YOU'RE INVITED--MEXICO RAILFAN FUN-TRAIN--July 17-31, 1977--Copper Canyon, Taxco, Acapulco, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Metro, Street Cars, locomotive ride, join anywhere (trip starts in Oklahoma), Mexico cool in summer--write MIDWEST TRAVEL SERVICE, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City, OK, 73110--Phone 405-732-0566.

Railroad, Traction, Trolleys, Airlines, Shipping, Expositions and Americana uniform buttons. Stamp for list. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

RAILROADIANA EVENT OF THE SPRING: Spectacular buy/sell Railroadiana Flea Market sponsored by National Association of Timetable Collectors. Saturday May 21, 1977. Geo. Washington Motor Lodge US #1 at Pennsylvania Turnpike, Trevose PA, 1 mile N. of Philadelphia, 9am-5pm. Tables available $9 ea, no limit. You can't miss this fantastic event. Make checks to: Tom Coval, 21 E Robin Rd, Holland PA 18966.

Cast iron railroad pot-bellied stove from York, Pennsylvania railroad station. Mushroom top cast with words "STATION AGENT." Made by Union Stove Works. $575 or best offer. FOB Virginia. Box 301, Woodstock VA 22664. 50¢ stamps for picture.

Tired of calculating MPH? Rail Speed-O-Graph gives instant MPH based on mileposts. Both sides of 4x9 card. Speeds from 30 to 120mph. Keep several handy. 5 for $1, or $2/dozen. Dan Yaeger, 2239 Ferncliff, St. Louis MO 63122.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, Pullman, stationery, rules, metal items from 25 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. (Will buy large and small railroad collections.)

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UTILIZING SCHEDULED SERVICE

LETTERS (continued from page 2)

Mr. Linde, your argument is now complete. Nobody won this one. Amtrak's promotions generated the fares, but the operations people weren't ready for them. Travelers thus induced to try the train got rough treatment and an unfavorable impression (I have not mentioned all the lesser snafus). And even the potentially favorable economics of the huge passenger load were hurt because increasing capacity by 75 or 100 meant calling out and stocking another complete set of expensive hardware and paying holiday wages to another set of crews.

If, as I fear, we must live with the Turbos on this route, may I suggest selling only reserved seats on weekends? Such a policy would save, for example, queuing up at 6:30am in Windsor Station--as we did--for #68's 8:15 departure, and might even gain Amtrak a few repeat passengers.

Alan M. Crossley
Groton, Connecticut

The article by Dr. Monaghan on Amtrak finances (1st Feb issue) is one of the best you've published on any subject. At last we've gotten some clear thinking on the subject of long-haul vs short-haul losses. Apparently the long distance passenger train is not the hopeless loser so many would have it to be. His mention of their potential as "cruise ships" is worthwhile but neglects their very useful role as transportation over the short to medium distances. Even the SOUTHERN CRESCENT which comes as close to "cruise" quality as any train running today has a lot of people getting on and off at stops along the way--despite the fact that it runs at odd hours thru much of its route and that there is no complementary day train.

Robert van Wormer
Salisbury, North Carolina

EXPRESS AD

So you're in Los Angeles headed for Fullerton, 35 minutes south by train. Or so Amtrak misled you to believe. Amtrak has held your train up to 45 minutes for 80 transfers from the north or east. Your 35-minute trip now takes 80 minutes. That is jilting the customer. That is making your led-on customer your fierce enemy for life. Paul Reistrup, that is heinous incompetence. Robert J. Swan demands railroad standards out West. Expediting the improvement of low-cost rail transit the public transit catalyst says more. If you think your railroad is running a top-notch freight service, you may be right. If you are running a top-notch passenger service for Amtrak, then the standards spill over into freight. Most railroadmen want to give the finest, safest, most punctual, most courteous service possible to passengers. Holding back proficiency permanently wounds morale. Wounded morale can only provide imperfect freight service. American railroad image requires your very best. Let yourself feel good by being outstanding in all your railroad services.